

with 70 out of 100 votes. We were hijacked by the House of Representatives in conference. I was one of the conferees. They just flat out hijacked us. When it was clear to them we were going to win the issue in conference, they adjourned the conference, never to see them again, and they stripped the provision.

I offered the same provision in the Senate Appropriations Committee, and it is now in the Agriculture appropriations bill. That is coming to the floor of the Senate. We have 70 Senators who said they think it is wrong to continue sanctions on food and medicine. The message in the Senate is: Stop using food as a weapon. It is the right message.

There are a lot of people in the House of Representatives who apparently are willing to do that except for Cuba; Cuba is a special case, and they will not withdraw sanctions on food and medicine with respect to Cuba. In fact, that is what derailed it last year.

I am one person, but I tell my colleagues that I am not going to allow, to the extent I can prevent it, the hijacking of this issue again this year by just two or three people who decide they are going to strip this provision and then have the House and Senate deal with the broader appropriations issues that do not include this provision.

We have spent a lot of time on this issue. This country is wrong in applying sanctions with respect to food and medicine shipments to countries such as Cuba. Yes, Cuba.

I was in Cuba last year. I have no truck with the Castro government. I think the Cuban government and its economic system have collapsed. But the sanctions that exist with respect to this country's actions against Cuba have represented Fidel Castro's greatest excuse to the Cuban people. He says: Of course my economy does not work; of course my country is in trouble. The United States has had its fist around our neck for 40 years.

It is Fidel Castro's greatest excuse, in my judgment, for an economic system that has failed Cuba. It does not make sense, in my judgment, for us to exact a penalty on the Cuban people, on poor people, on hungry people, and on sick people in Cuba, in North Korea, and elsewhere to continue these absurd sanctions on food and medicine.

We can have a broader discussion at some other time about whether the embargo that exists with Cuba ought to be lifted. That is a different subject, a broader subject. Incidentally, I have strong feelings about that as well. This is a narrower issue: Do we believe it appropriate to continue sanctions with respect to the shipment of food and medicine to countries such as Cuba, North Korea, Iran, and others? The answer ought to be a resounding no.

My colleague, Senator SLADE GORTON from the State of Washington, is in the

Chamber. He was a cosponsor of this in the Senate Appropriations Committee. He, I, and JOHN ASHCROFT have issued a statement that says to all within hearing distance that if you think you are going to hijack this issue again this year, think again, because we have 70 votes in the Senate that say we ought not use food and medicine as a weapon, and we intend to insist this year that we prevail on this issue.

I cannot speak for anybody else, but the statement we issued is pretty self-explanatory. I am here to give fair warning to those who want to do what they did last year that it is going to be a pretty difficult proposition if they intend to hijack this issue. We have the votes. Vote on it in the Senate, and it will pass by an overwhelming margin. Allow a vote in the House, and it will pass by an overwhelming margin. The only way those who want to defeat this proposition because it contains Cuba—which is an irrational position, for those who think through this a little bit—the only way they can possibly defeat it is to try to use some hijinks in the process to avoid an up-or-down vote.

I and others intend to see we have a full opportunity to have votes in the House and the Senate on it. If the House leadership does what it did last year, I say to them: Fair warning, I am going to be here on the floor of the Senate objecting to a whole series of things. We need to straighten this out now. This country, at this time, on this issue, says we will no longer use sanctions with respect to the shipment of food and medicine. It does not work, it is not a moral policy, and it ought to stop now.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is concluded.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:47 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:30 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore.

#### SENATE PHOTOGRAPH

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could ask our colleagues to take their seats, then we will begin a series of photographs. Please, stay in place until we are given the all-clear sign. If you can go ahead and be seated, we will be able to determine exactly which Senators may still be missing.

#### STEVE BENZA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, as we prepare to have this photograph taken, I note that the Senate photographer, who has been with the Senate some 32 years, Steve Benza, is preparing to retire. Steve started out as a page. He worked in the Architect's Office. He worked in the Senate Post Office. He worked in the photo lab. And for years he has taken photographs of us in various and sundry places, some of which we would not like to recount but we will remember warmly.

I ask my colleagues, before we begin these series of photographs, to express our appreciation to Steve Benza for his 32 years of service to the institution.

[Applause.]

(Thereupon, the official Senate photograph was taken.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Would the Chair kindly advise the Senate with regard to the pending business.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is consideration of the Defense authorization bill, S. 2549, which the clerk will report.

Mr. WARNER. I am ready to proceed.

I ask my distinguished friend and colleague from Michigan if he is likewise ready to go.

Mr. LEVIN. We are indeed. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2549) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2001 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 3173

(Purpose: To extend eligibility for medical care under CHAMPUS and TRICARE to persons over age 64)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Virginia [Mr. WARNER], for himself, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. MURKOWSKI, proposes an amendment numbered 3173.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike sections 701 through 704 and insert the following: